

his wit and his resoun, and al his debonaire lif spirituel, that sholde kepen his soule. Certes, it bynymeth eek Goddes due lordshipe, and that is mannes soule, & the love of his neighbores. It stryvethe eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveteth hym the quiete of his herte, and subverteth his soule.

Of ire comen thise stynkyng engendures: first hate, that is cold wratthe; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde frend that he hath loved ful longe. And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighbores, in body or in catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel, that homicide, that is manslaughter, is in diverse wise. Som manere of homicide is spirituel, and som is bodily.

SPIRITUEL manslaughter is in sixe thynges, first, by hate; as Seint John seith: he that hateth his brother is homicide. Homicide is eek by bakbitynge; of whiche bakbiters seith Salomon: that they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hire neighbores. For soothly, as wikke is to bynyme his good name, as his lyf. Homicide is eek in yevynge of wikked conseil by fraude; as for to yeven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and taillages. Of whiche seith Salomon: Leoun rorynge and bere hongry been like to the cruel lordshipes, in withholdynge or abreggyng of the shepe, or the hyre, or of the wages of servaunts, or elles in usure or in withdrawynge of the almesse of powre folk. For which the wise man seith: fedeth hym that almost dyeth for hunger. For soothly, but if thou feede hym, thou sleest hym; and alle thise been deedly synnes. Bodily manslaughter is, when thou sleest him with thy tonge in oother manere; as when thou comandest to sleen a man, or elles yevest hym conseil to sleen a man.

MANSLAUGHTRE in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe; right as a justice dampneth hym that is coupable to the deeth. But lat the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delit to spille blood, but for keepynge of rightwisnesse. Another homicide is, that is doon for necessitee, as when o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, & that he ne may noon ootherwise escape from his owene deeth. But certeinly, if he may escape withouten manslaughter of his adversarie, & sleeth hym, he dooth synne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly synne. Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which he sleeth a man, he is homicide. Eek if a womman by negligence overlyteth

hir child in hir slepyng, it is homicide and deedly synne. Eek when man destourbith concepcioun of a child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drynkynge venenouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drynkynge wilfully, or elles putteth certein material thynges in hire secree places to slee the child; or elles dooth unkyndely synne, by which man or womman shedeth hire nature in manere or in place theras a child may nat be conceived; or elles, if a woman have conceyved and hurt herself, and sleeth the child, yet it is homicide. What seye we eek of wommen that morden hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an homicide. Homicide is eek if a man approcheth to a womman by desir of lecherie, thurgh which the child is perished, or elles smyteth a womman wityngly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle thise been homicides and horrible deedly synnes.

ET comen ther of ire manye mo synnes, as wel in word, as in thought, & in dede; as he that arreteth upon God, or blameth God, of thyng of which he is hymself gilty; or despiseth God and alle his halwes, as doon thise cursed hasardours in diverse contrees. This cursed synne doon they, when they feelen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of God and of his halwes. Also, when they treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter. Thilke synne is so greet, that unnethe may it been releessed, but that the mercy of God passeth alle his werkis; it is so greet, and he so benigne.

THANNE comth of ire, attry angre; when a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to foreleten his synne, thanne wole he be angry and answeren hoerly and angrily, and defenden or excusen his synne by unstedfastnesse of his flessch; or elles he dide it for to holde compaignye with his felawes; or elles, he seith, the fend enticed hym; or elles he dide it for his youthe; or elles his compleccioun is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certein age; or elles, he seith, it cometh hym of gentillesse of his auncestres; and semblaible thynges. Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir synnes, that they ne wol nat delivere hemself, for soothly, no wight that excuseth hym wilfully of his synne may nat been delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne.

AFTER this, thanne cometh sweryng, that is expres agayn the comandement of God; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of ire. God seith: Thou shalt nat take the name of thy Lord God in veyn

or in ydel. Also oure Lord Jhesu Crist seith, by the word of Seint Mathew: Nolite iurare omnino: Ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevne, for it is Goddes throne; ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet; ne by Jerusalem, for it is the citee of greet kyng; ne be thyng heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whit ne blak. But seyeth by youre word, Ye, ye, and Nay, nay; and what that is moore, it is of yvel, nay; and what that is Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so synfully, in dismembryng of Crist by soule, herte, bones, & body. For certes, it semeth that ye thynke that the cursede Jewes ne dismembred nat ynough the precious persone of Crist, but ye dismembered hym moore. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of God in youre sweryng, as seith Jeremie, quarto capitulo: Jurabis in veritate, in iudicio et in justicia: thou shalt hope thre condicions; thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse. This is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth; for every lesynge is agayns Crist; for Crist is verray trouthe. And thynk wel this, that every greet swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whil he useth swich unleveful sweryng. Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, when thou art constreyned by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe. Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye, ne for favour, ne for meede, but for rightwisnesse; & for declaracioun of it, to the worship of God and helpynge of thyne evne Cristene. And therefore, every man that taketh Goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on hym the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and lyveth agayns Cristes lyvyng and his techynge, alle they taken Goddes name in ydel.

LOKE eek what seint Peter seith, Actuum quarto capitulo: Non est aliud nomen sub celo, etc. Ther nys noon oother name, seith Seint Peter, under hevne, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved. That is to seyn, but the name of Jhesu Crist. Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith Seint Paul ad Philipenses secundo: In nomine Jhesu, etc.: that in the name of Jhesu every knece of hevencly creatures, or ethely, or of helle, sholden bowe. For it is so heigh and so worshipful that the cursede fend in helle sholde tremblen to heeren it yncompnd. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise hym moore boodely than dide the cursede Jewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth when he heareth his name.

NO certes, sith that sweryng, but if it be lawfully doon, is so heighly defended, muche worse is forsweryng falsly, and yet nedeless.

WHAT seye we eek of hem that deliten hem in sweryng, and holden it a gentrie or a manly dede to swere grete othes? And what of hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse nat to swere grete othes, al be the cause nat worth a straw? Certes, it is horrible synne. Sweryng so dedynly, withoute avysement, is eek a synne. But lat us go now to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon thise false enchauntours or nigromanciens, in bacyns ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle, or in a fir, or in a shulderboon of a sheepe. I kan nat seye but that they doon cursedly and damnably, agayns Crist and al the feith of hooly chirche.

WHAT seye we of hem that bileeven in divynailes, as by flight or by noyse of briddes, or of beestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores, or crakyng of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse? Certes, al this thyng is defended by God, and by al hooly chirche, for which they been acursed til they come to amendement, that on swich filthe setten hire bileve. Charnes for woundes or maladie of men, or of beestes, if they taken any effect, it be peraventure that God suffreth it, for folk sholden yewe the moore feith and reverence to his name. Now wol I speken of lesynges, which generally is fals significacioun of word, in entente to deceyven his evne cristene. Some lesynge is, of which ther comth noon advantage to no wight; and some lesynge turneth to the ese and profit of o man, and to disese and damage of another man. Another lesynge is for to saven his lyf or his catel. Another lesynge comth of delit for to lye, in which delit they wol forge a long tale, & peynten it with alle circumstaunces, where al the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesynge comth for he wole sustene his word; & som lesynge comth of recchelesnesse, withouten avisement; and semblaible thynges.

LET us now touche the vice of flaterynge, which ne comth nat gladly, but for drede, or for covetise. Flaterie is generally wrongful preisyng. Flateres been the devels norices, that norissen his children with milk of losengerie, forsothe, Salomon seith: that flaterie is wors than detraccioun. For somtyme detraccion maketh an hauteyn man be the moore humble, for he dredeth detraccion; but certes, flaterie, that maketh a man to enchauncen his herte and his con-